

PETER FINER

ARMS and ARMOUR of ASIA





Peter Finer Antique Arms and Armour are honoured to participate in *Asian Art in London, 2016*.

The items included in this catalogue are among those we shall exhibit at the gallery, at 38/39 Duke Street, St James's, from 3–12 November for the event.

Pieces date from the 15th–19th centuries and represent cultures as diverse as Ottoman, Persian, Tibetan, Japanese and Indian. We are thrilled to share these works of art with you and welcome your visit.

A pricelist for items in the catalogue is available upon request and we ship objects worldwide.

Redmond, Peter and Roland Finer

- 1 *An Anatolian 'Turban' Helmet, 15th century*
- 2 *An Ottoman Leg Guard, 15th century*
- 3 *An Ottoman Light Composite Bow, 17th-18th century*
- 4 *An Ottoman Yataghan, signed and dated 1252 AH, 1836*
- 5 *An Ottoman Indian-Jade Hilted Jambiya, circa 1850*
- 6 *An Ottoman Over-and-Under Percussion Pistol, circa 1850*
- 7 *An Ottoman Agate-Hilted and Silver-Mounted Dagger, circa 1880*
- 8 *A Sumatran Gold-Mounted Sword, or Pendang, 18th century*
- 9 *A Persian Saddle Axe-head, 18th-19th century*
- 10 *A Persian Gold-Damascened Watered-Steel Shield, 19th century*
- 11 *A Persian Iron Priming Flask, or Barutdan, dated 1159 AH, 1746*
- 12 *A Tibetan Domed Cane Shield, 16th-18th century*
- 13 *A Pair of Eastern Tibetan or Chinese Stirrups, 17th -18th century*
- 14 *An Eastern Tibetan or Chinese Saddle, 17th-18th century*
- 15 *A Tibetan Archer's Quiver, or Mda' Shubs, 18th-19th century*
- 16 *A Bhutanese Silver-Mounted Short Sword, 19th century*
- 17 *A Caucasian Priming Flask, circa 1860-1880*
- 18 *A Caucasian Kindjal, late 19th century*
- 19 *A Large Caucasian Kindjal, signed and dated 1317 AH, 1899*
- 20 *A Pair of Japanese Omi Yari, or Spearheads,
Signed Masatsugu, circa 1532-1586*
- 21 *A Japanese Helmet, or Nambam Kabuto, circa 1580-1620*

- 22 *A Japanese Helmet, or Nambam Kabuto, circa 1590-1640*
- 23 *A Pair of Japanese Armoured sleeves, or Kote,
by Unkai Mitsunao, 17th century*
- 24 *A Large Japanese Presentation Arrowhead, or Yanone, 17th century*
- 25 *A Japanese Presentation Arrowhead, or Yanone,
by Sukemune, 17th century*
- 26 *A Massive Japanese Arrowhead, or Yanone, 18th century*
- 27 *A Japanese Dagger, Signed by the Master Hagiya Katsuhira, Third-quarter
of the 19th century*
- 28 *An Indian Carved Ivory Priming Flask, mid-17th century*
- 29 *An Indian Lacquered Hide Shield, 18th century*
- 30 *An Indian Katar in the Mughal Fashion, early 18th century*
- 31 *An Indian Gold-Encrusted Katar, 18th century*
- 32 *An Indian Katar with Gold-encrusted Hilt, 18th century*
- 33 *A Pair of Silver-Mounted Indian Flintlock Holster Pistols,
by Claude Martin, at the Lucknow Arsenal, circa 1785*
- 34 *A Pair of Indian Miniature Tipuesque Cannon, 1800*
- 35 *An Indian Katar with a Gem-set Gilt and Enamelled Hilt
circa 1800-30*
- 36 *An Indian Gem-Set Pesh-Kabz with Scabbard and a Concealed Set of Small
Implements, 19th century*
- 37 *An Indian Silver-Mounted Buffalo-Horn Powder Flask, circa 1850-60*



1

An Anatolian 'Turban' Helmet

15th century. Ak-Koyunlu or Shirvanshah
Steel and Silver. 30.5 x 24 cm / 12 x 9 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Christie's, Islamic Art, London, 9 October 1990, lot 123

Private collection, USA

LITERATURE

Robert Hales, *Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour*, Channel Islands, 2013, no. 779, p. 323

The embossed skull is of one-piece construction, with broad diagonal flutes, and retains its original sliding nasal bar with a leaf-shaped top. The skull retains traces of Arabic pious inscriptions

arranged within the bands damascened in silver. The pierced raised bosses that decorate the base are a particularly rare feature on a Turban helmet.



An Ottoman Leg Guard

Late 15th century
Steel and silver. 43 x 9 cm / 17 x 7 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Struck with the mark of the Imperial Ottoman arsenal, in the former church of Hagia Eirene, Istanbul

Probably dispersed from the arsenal by order of Sultan Abdül Mecid I In 1839–40

Private collection, USA

Such leg guards protected the outer lower legs of a warrior on horseback; *Qur'anic* inscriptions decorate the finest examples, frequently, as here, overlaid in silver. The engraved Arabic inscriptions on this guard

Al sultan.. / Al Malik..
(The King / The Absolute Ruler)

refer to the earthly ruler and the divine ruler, Allah, respectively. The inclusion of one of the *Al-Asma al-Husna* (Ninety-Nine Beautiful names of Allah) also imbued this piece with talismanic powers of protection.

A similar pair of leg guards is found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. This leg

guard bears the mark of the Imperial Ottoman arsenal, known as the '*tamga* of the *Kayi*'; the mark was added to armour that entered the arsenal. The Byzantine architectural jewel, the church of Saint Irene became a repository for plunder gained in the Ottoman campaigns against the Aq Qoyunlu Turkomans, the Persian Safavids and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and the Levant.

In the first-half of the nineteenth century the arsenal at Hagia Eirene was cleared of much of its armour and weapons by order of the Ottoman Sultan Abdül Mecid I, at which point many of these objects first appeared on the international art market.





3

An Ottoman Light Composite Bow

17th–18th century

Horn, wood, sinew, paint, lacquer and gold. 119 x 32 cm / 47 x 12 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Belgium

This composite, recurved bow is lacquered on the grip and sides of the outer face of the arms with traces of gold embellishment. The slotted tips of the arms, called the nocks, are left undecorated, but have lacquered applied wooden bands that are also embellished with gold. The belly of the bow is adorned with cartouches that contain flowers alternating with yellow scroll patterns, both against a red background.

A composite bow, as the name implies, is one made of several materials. The floral design that decorates this bow can be found on Ottoman textiles of the 17th and 18th centuries and it shows a European influence, suggesting that this bow was perhaps manufactured in Istanbul. It compares to a similar composite bow in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





4

An Ottoman Yataghan, signed and dated 1252 AH

1252 AH is the year 1836 AD
Walrus ivory, steel and gold. 70 cm / 27.5 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

The grip and pommel of this piece are formed of walrus ivory fitted and riveted around three sides of the tang of the blade. The pommel ends are rounded, and oblong in shape with a flattened top; this type of grip and pommel were popular under the Ottomans in the 19th century. The blade is of typical double-curved, single-edged yataghan type and its top edge is decorated with gold damascened scrolls. On one side of the blade there is a large cartouche containing an Ottoman Turkish inscription which states the date, 1251 al-Hijri (AH, or 1836 AD in the Gregorian calendar,) and the name of

the maker, Sadiqi. The inscription also states that this weapon was owned by Rashid Quqcheh Li (*Mashibah Rashid Quqcheh Li*, or 'A companion of Rashid Quqcheh Li'). A poem follows: 'Make this a sign of Zulfiqar'.

During the Battle of Uhud against the Meccans in 625 AD, the Prophet Muhammad gave 'Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, a miraculous, bifurcated sword called *Zulfiqar*'. The weapon was regarded throughout the Islamic world as both a relic and a talisman with protective powers.



An Ottoman Indian-Jade Hilted Jambiya

circa 1850

Jade, steel, gold, silver and wood. 44 cm / 18 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

This dagger belongs to a well-known group which have Mughal jade hilts, decorated in the Ottoman style. The example here is chiselled and inlaid in gold.

Its watered steel blade is decorated on both sides with finely-chiselled arabesques, and adorned in gold with foliage.

The repoussé silver scabbard is decorated with densely intertwined flowers and foliage, and mounted with a carved jade with shows a flower-head, stem and leaves.







6

An Ottoman Over-and-Under Percussion Pistol

circa 1850
Wood, steel, gold and silver. 35.5 cm / 14 in

PROVENANCE

Richard R. Wagner Jr. collection

LITERATURE

Oliver S. Pinchot, *Arms of the Paladins, The Richard R. Wagner Jr. Collection of Fine Eastern Weapons*, Rhode Island 2014, p. 96, fig. 5-23

By the mid-19th century the Ottoman Empire had become extensively influenced by the technological advances of its European trading partners, notably France and Great Britain. There was, however, an abundant supply of indigenous skilled labour within the wide regions of the empire, and Ottoman gun-makers deftly copied

European systems, invariably bettering them through the elaborate use of ornamental precious metals.

This pistol is decorated with engraved flowering gold foliage and bears the Armenian maker's name.





7

An Ottoman Agate-Hilted and Silver-Mounted Dagger

circa 1880

Steel, silver, gold, agate, turquoise and wood. 47 cm / 18.5 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

This striking dagger's long recurved blade of watered steel ends in a long clipped point. Shaped panels of gold-damascened scrollwork decorated its base, as does a rectangular cartouche with an inscription in gold. The reverse of the blade contains smaller gold calligraphic writing framed below a flower. The carved faceted agate hilt is decorated with inset pairs of minute turquoise beads, while clusters of turquoise also encrust its silver basal mount. The dagger's wood-lined silver

scabbard contains chased patterns of scrolling flowers and leaves on a contrasting finely-pounded matted ground; its mouth is again studded with a row of turquoise.

Though this dagger is in a better state of conservation, a related piece may be found in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



A Sumatran Gold-Mounted Sword, or Pendang

18th century. Probably Aceh, North Sumatra
Steel, wood, gold and rose-gold. 79 cm x 31 in

PROVENANCE

London Art Trade, 1970s, Private collection, Great Britain

Although swords did exist among native Indonesian weapons, they were small in number, and not a traditional weapon for armed duels or combat. The popularity of swords increased with the arrival of the Portuguese, and later the Spanish and Dutch. The word for sword, *pendang*, may be derived from the Portuguese word for the weapon, *espada*, or the Malay word for gun, *snapang*, derived from the 'snaphaune' lock of the European gun.

The Achinese were also heavily influenced by the Ottomans, who from the period of Suleiman the Great and Selim II, accepted Aceh as part of the Ottoman Empire to defend them from the Portuguese. The Ottomans taught the Achinese the art of cannon making, and introduced them to other Ottoman arms. This is certainly true of the *yatagan*, which was more versatile weapon than the *kilij*. The Achinese pendang here is particularly influenced by the Ottoman yatagan. The hilt of this pendang shows extremely fine gold-work and the finest filigree work, and the scrollwork and other designs also show Ottoman influence (today the flag of Aceh remains the old Ottoman flag, three crescent and stars on a green ground.) The head of the beast is closer to that found on Ottoman sword hilts than those native to Makara. Ottoman influence waned in the late 18th century, which dates this sword to the mid-18th century, if not earlier.







9

A Persian Saddle Axe-head

Late 18th – early 19th century, Early Qajar dynasty
Steel, gold and silver. 12 cm / 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

The Arabic inscription within the rich decorative scheme on this axe-head is drawn in *Naskh* script and reads: *Ya qadi alhajat*, or 'Oh Judge [of] Needs.' The phrase is one of the names from the *Al-Asma al-Husna*, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of Allah. According to legend, the Prophet Mohammed invoked Allah through a series of names, adjectives and phrases; over time these pious forms of address totaled ninety-nine and were recorded, although the names included in this list are acknowledged by scholars as variable.

From ancient times saddle axes or *tabarzin* were the popular weapon of the Persian cavalry and celebrated in Persian literature such as the *Shahnama* (*Book of Kings*.) In graphic art they were symbols of power and bravery. The acclaimed Persian war leader Nadir Shah Afshar (r. 1736-47) was always shown in statuary with his *tabarzin* prominently borne, an illustration of the esteem in which the weapon was held in Persian culture.





10

A Persian Gold-Damascened Watered-Steel Shield

19th century, Qajar dynasty
Steel, gold, velvet, iron and leather. 35.5 cm / 14 in

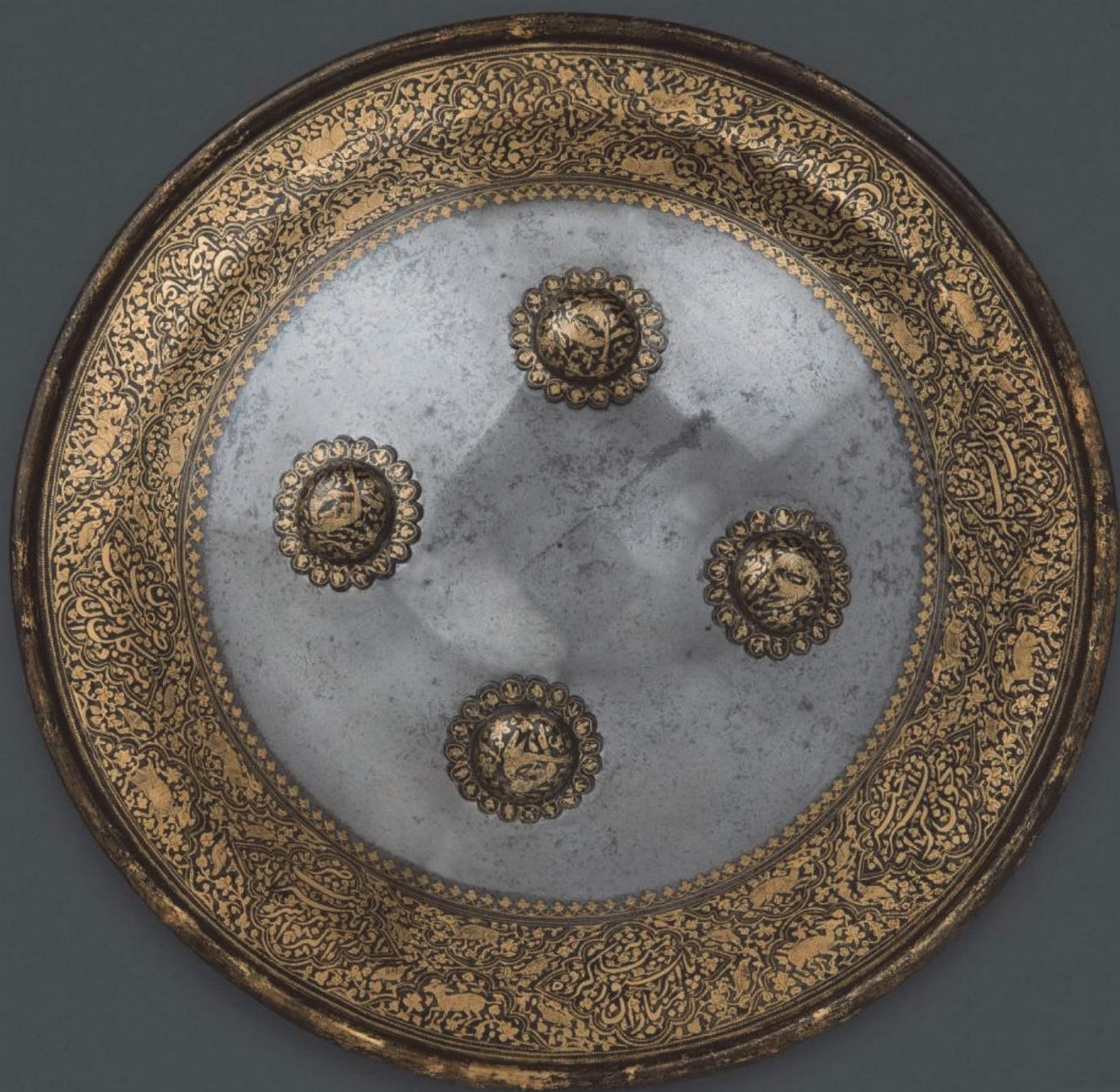
The inner concave plate of this shield is of fine watered-steel and bears four iron circular bosses decorated with combating birds in gold *koftgari*. The outer iron brim is riveted to the watered-steel plate and entirely decorated with gold *koftgari* cartouches that contain Persian inscriptions written in fine *Naskh* calligraphy. The poem reads:

*If he was hit by an axe on the head
In the middle, he would hold feet firmly
Around the moon... it came like a star
From one foot...
It was full of gems, and rubies
It was round like the moon
It came like the army of faith...*

اگر بر سر او ضربت تیر آمده
... میانه پا استوار کرده
بدور قمر همچون ... اختر آمده
ز یک پا ... گر چو آب افتاد
پر ز یاقوت لعل گوهر بود
همچو دور قمر مدور بود
آمد همچون لشکر دین

It was a fashionable verse of the period and is found, with variations, on similar shields. This shield, with regard to decoration, style, and inscription, is particularly comparable to several in the Wallace Collection, London.









11

A Persian Iron Priming Flask, or Barutdan, Damascened in Gold and dated 1159 AH

1159 AH, the year 1746 AD
Iron and gold. 10.5 x 14.7 cm / 4 x 5 ¾ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

This priming flask, or *barutdan*, used to pour primer into a flintlock gun, has a bulbous, curved body that terminates in a bud-like form. The body of the flask has been decorated in gold *koftgari* to look zoomorphic: delicate scales cover the body of the flask and its tip is decorated with an eye. A large cartouche at the piece's centre is divided by a band that contains gold *koftgari* scroll work. On either side of the band are Arabic inscriptions;

one side features intricate calligraphy in *Thuluth*, and the other *Nasta'liq*, which states:

Hu 'Ali ya 'Ali
(He 'Ali, oh 'Ali)

Although the shape of this flask was common for this period, its decoration is very finely executed and of distinct quality.

12

A Tibetan Domed Cane Shield

16th–18th century

Iron, gold, silver, bamboo cane, rattan and hide. 66.5 cm / 26 inches in diameter

PROVENANCE

The Robert Haber collection, USA

Tibetan shields of this type are extremely rare and this piece is in near–perfect condition.

An example closely comparable to the shield seen here is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.







13

A Pair of Eastern Tibetan or Chinese Stirrups

17th–18th century
Steel and gold. 16.5 cm / 6 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Mr Jeremy Pine, until 2007

In Chinese Taoist and Buddhist symbolism the horned dragon or 'Celestial Stag' is a beneficent creature: it represents the sun, light, sovereignty and the masculine *yang*.

The dragons chiselled and gilt on these stirrups are of notable quality, as is the ironwork. Their

outer edge is engraved with a diaper pattern, the side-bars with a vertical arrangement of horned dragons entwined within a ground of dense scroll-work, and an addorsed pair of tightly crouching dragons support the suspension loops.



An Eastern Tibetan or Chinese Saddle

17th–18th century

Wood, steel, gold, silver, leather and silk. 56 x 44 cm / 22 x 17 ¼ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

In Tibetan Buddhism the Three Jewels are symbolic of the faith's three guiding principles: the Buddha, represented by the yellow jewel; *dharma*, or the teachings of Buddha, the blue jewel; and *sangha*, one's spiritual community, the red Jewel.

The iron on the upper portion of this saddle is decorated with an elaborate pierced and chiselled design in low relief; suspended at its centre is the flaming Three Jewels, or *konchok*, flanked by a pair of tufted slender dragons tangled in long tendrils. Small clouds, mountains and waves also feature in the ornamentation here.

This chiselled work is damascened in silver, and unusually, the gilt areas are mercury-gilded over the silver damascening, and not damascened in gold directly onto the iron surface, probably due to the maker not knowing how to mercury-gild directly onto iron.

The chiselled iron plates on the saddle compare closely with a detached pommel plate in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and with a full set of plates on a saddle also in that collection. The former pommel is highly arched, in a style almost identical to that here.







15

A Tibetan Archer's Quiver, or Mda' Shubs

18th–19th Century

Leather, iron and paint. 46 x 23 cm / 18 x 9 in

This quiver is painted with a tiger-skin border, a snarling tiger, and a tiger mask. It has provision for perhaps twelve arrows; the slender size and narrow shape of the internal divides suggests that the quiver was intended either for arrows with slender heads of quadrangular section, or arrows with a narrow spear-like point. The esteemed scholar Donald J. La Rocca suggests that each of these two types of arrow was used for piercing armour, and distinct from those designed for hunting. The two types of arrowhead may correspond to those types which in Tibetan are known as *phag lce* (pig tongue) and *khyi lce* (dog tongue.)

The construction of this quiver compares closely with another, together with its bow case, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and with one in the National Museums of Scotland.





A Bhutanese Silver-Mounted Short Sword

19th century

Steel, silver, and wood. 55 cm / 21.7 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

The broad blade of this short sword is inlaid with brass, and its characteristic hilt embossed and chased in low relief. The Three Jewels, or *konchok*, of Buddhism, and a pair of lithe dragons decorate the hilt on a finely punched ground. A trellised design of flower-heads covers the reverse.

The sword's silver scabbard, embossed and chased in relief, is wildly decorated with churning open-mouthed dragons and verdure that engulf the Eight Auspicious Signs of Buddhism. These symbols of progress on the path to enlightenment, reached by way of the Three Jewels, include: the umbrella, the fish, the vase, the lotus, the conch, the knot of eternity, and the victory banner.







17

A Caucasian Priming Flask

circa 1860–1880

Silver, gold, niello and wood. 8.5 x 14 cm / 3 ½ x 5 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

18

A Caucasian Kindjal

late 19th century

Steel, silver and wood. 48.5 cm / 19 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Switzerland

This *kindjal* has a sharply tapered fullered; the hilt and scabbard are each entirely decorated with silver *niello* and the remaining surfaces are elaborately decorated with chased running bands of flowers and scrolls on a contrasting matted ground. The piece bares Russian silver marks.





19

An Exceptionally Large Caucasian Kindjal, signed and dated 1317 AH

1317 AH, the year 1899 AD

Walrus ivory, steel, silver, horn and gold. 61 cm / 24 in

The blade of this *kindjal* contains a linear panel of gold *koftgari* scrollwork with gold inscription and the bladesmith's signature – *آلى* – *Ali*, and the date ۱۳۱۷, the year 1317 AH, or 1899 in the Gregorian calendar. The kindjal's iron hilt is covered with gold *koftgari* and fitted with walrus ivory grip-scales fixed by rivets with domed

nielloed silver heads on small silver mounts. The piece is in its original scabbard, entirely encased in silver and decorated with both flat and chased inlaid patterns arranged within silver beaded filigree borders. It retains its original horn-and ivory-mounted by-knife.





20

*A Pair of Japanese
Omi Yari, or
Spearheads,
Signed Masatsugu*

circa 1532–1586


Steel, wood and lacquer

Length of the blade: 68.6 cm / 27 in

Length of tang: 75 cm / 29 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Italy



The blades of this pair of spearheads are of *hira sankaku* shape – broadening towards the point – and cut with a single red lacquered, straight groove in the base (or *bo bi*.) The grain of the blade is a well-forged, tight *itame*, the *hamon* being *sugu ba* (straight) with *ko nie*, *sunagashi* and other activity in the *yakiba* and at the point. Such weapons made in the Yamato province are renowned for their elegant forging. The *tang* is signed:

南都住金房兵衛尉政次

(*Nantō ju Kanabō Hyobejō Masatsugu*)

meaning ‘Kanabō Hyobejō Masatsugu living in Nara [made this].’

Nara, in the province of Yamato, was the ancient capital of Japan and it became an important centre for the production of armour even after the Imperial Court moved to Kyoto. The name *Kanabō* derives from the fact that the group who made these spearheads worked at Kanabō tsuji or ‘Kanabō crossroads’ in Nara. Their origins are otherwise rather obscure, but they are thought to have descended from the *Tegai* or *Senjuin* groups who produced swords for the Imperial court. The Kanabō began working in Nara during the Muromachi period (1337–1573) and continued until the Edo period. There were a considerable number of smiths in the group, all of whom used either 正

or 政 as the first character of their names, both being pronounced *Masa*. Two smiths used the name Masatsugu but signed their swords with different signatures. The first of these smiths worked between 1532–1555, the other around 1555–1586 and appears to have been his son. (It is not possible to say which of these smiths made the present blades.)

The first blade is marked just below the shoulder of the blade with the number two, 二, whilst towards the end of the tang are five small notches that were probably added by the shaft maker to match the blade to its shaft.

The second blade is similar in all respects to the first except that it is marked on the reverse side of the *tang* with the number 12, 十二 preceded by an indecipherable mark that might represent, *dai*, 第, indicating the number is an ordinal. Like the first blade, the *tang* is cut with a series of small notches along one edge near the base, in this case 12 notches match the blade number. The presence of the number 12 on this blade indicates that the two *yari* once formed part of a number of identical weapons. Such sets were produced for the bodyguards of *daimyo* and other important officials.

The blades are accompanied by their original scabbards in textured red *lacquer*.



A Japanese Helmet, or Nambam Kabuto

1580–1620

Steel, gold, silver and lacquer. 19.5 x 27 cm / 7 ¾ x 10 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Mr. Robert Burawoy, Galerie Robert Burawoy, Paris, 1977

J. Supporta Collection, 2003

LITERATURE

J.C. Charbonnier, *Casques, Masques et Armures des Seigneurs de l'Ancienne Japon*, Paris, 2003, pp. 56-57

Galerie Robert Burawoy, *Paris, Armes Japonaises dans les collections privées françaises*, Paris, 1977, p. 25

The six plates of this russet iron helmet, a *kabuto*, each overlay another; they are of pierced lattice-form and have a raised and lightly hammered edge, raised rivets and inlaid silver decoration showing *karakusa*, Chinese grass. A broader, lower section is decorated by latticework inlaid with a band of silver Greek key motifs, similar to the Japanese *sayagata* pattern. This lower section

has damascened, or *nunomezogon*, silver and gold stylised Buddhist swords (*ken*) and storage jars (possibly for *sake*), above each of which is a family crest or *kamon* showing intersected diamond shapes. The underside of the helmet's rim is lacquered red and has a metal band for the fittings of a neck-protector, a *shikoro*, traditionally found on Japanese helmets.



A Japanese Helmet, or Namban Kabuto

circa 1590–1640

Steel, gold and silver. 19 x 26 cm / 7 ½ x 11 ¾ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

LITERATURE

Y. Okamoto, *The Namban Art of Japan*, New York and Tokyo, 1972

Catalogue to the exhibition *Spectacular Helmets of Japan, 16th–19th century*, Japan House Gallery, Japan Society, New York, 1985

Catalogue to the exhibition *Art Namban: les Portugais au Japon*, Musées Royaux d'Art et Histoire, Brussels, 1989

Catalogue to the exhibition *Japan und Europa 1543-1929*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, 1993

Formed of two hammered plates of russet iron, this helmet is embossed on each side with a winged dragon amid clouds, their eyes and tongues gilded, and bodies silvered. The dragons' scales are hammered and chased. The rivets that secure the plates are decorated with chrysanthemum-shaped washers while two layers of cable-like, lightly hammered wires run from the helmet's front to back, supported at various points by plain iron arches. Solid supporting forms

show typical *Momoyama*-period silver inlaid scrolling *karakusa*, or Chinese grass, floral motifs. The jauntily curved rim of the helmet has an applied edge, or *fukurin*, fixed to the main body of the helmet by rivets, again with large, decorative chrysanthemum-shaped washers. The underside of this rim retains a little of the original lacquering, which is of an unusual green hue, and pierced metal fittings for the neck-protector, or *shikoro*, traditionally found on Japanese helmets.



A Pair of Japanese Armoured sleeves, or Kote, by Unkai Mitsunao

17th century

Steel, silk, silver, brass and horn. 79 x 21 cm / 31 x 8 ¼ in

PROVENANCE

The Dr E. Budde collection, USA

The major plates of these *kote* are made of iron that was given a controlled coating of rust, called *sabi ji*, it was a common practice on all high quality Japanese armour during their period. The surface of the plates over the back of the hand, the *tekko*, at the top, the *kanmuri no ita* and the circular plate at the elbow, the *hiji gane*, were also enhanced by the filing of the surface with diagonal lines called *yasurime*. Like almost all Unkai work, these plates were decorated by applied iron cutouts, or *kiritsutsu*, splashed with a silvery alloy called *sawari*, meant to imitate raindrops or dew.

On the *tekko* the *kiritsutsu* represents a stylised lotus flower – of Buddhist significance – whilst the *kanmuri no ita* is decorated with scrolling foliage. The remainder of the sleeve contains realistically shaped holly leaves in russet iron, again splashed with *sawari*, embedded in mail.

Holly leaves may have a heraldic significance: they were used as a *kamon*, or crest, by many families. Typically, Unkai Mitsunao used an unconventional material and arrangement of links for the mail. Most Japanese mail, called *kusari*, is lacquered iron with the links arranged in a rectangular lattice. Here the mail is brass, to avoid damage to the underlying fabric by rust. The links were connected in a pattern in which each round link is connected to six others *asa no ha gusari*. The

sleeves are mounted on a layer of blue silk brocade lined with hemp. The fastening cords are of very pale blue silk suggesting this was the lacing colour of the armour from which the sleeves derive.

Armoured sleeves, called *kote*, formed part of almost every Japanese armour. This distinctive pair was made in the province of Kaga, the fief of the Maeda family who were established there in 1583. In the early 17th century they greatly improved the productivity of their lands, eventually producing an income of 1,200,000 *koku* of rice, a *koku* able to support a man for one year. In 1623 an armourer working under the name of Haruta Katsumitsu was persuaded to move to Kanazawa, the castle town of the Maeda, to make armour for the *daimyo*, or lord, and his vassals. Katsumitsu is alleged to have adopted the grandson of a Korean armourer called Unkai Mitsunao (or Mitsuhisa), the maker of these sleeves. Much of Unkai Mitsunao's biographical details remain unknown, but it is recorded that his actual name was Asai Dōsuke and that he died in 1708. On becoming master of the Kanazawa workshop the armourer developed a style today referred to as the Unkai style – it incorporated unconventional features in to traditional forms, for example the Buddhist motifs, a feature on these sleeves.







A Large Japanese Presentation Arrowhead, or Yanone

17th century, Edo period

Steel, gold and silver. 56.5 cm / 22 ¼ in

PROVENANCE

The Paul Goodman collection, USA

This arrowhead is of *karimata* type, with a russet finish. It is pierced at the collar with an *inome* aperture and the surface inlaid with an elaborate

design which shows dragons in swirling clouds of gold and silver *nunomezogan*. The dragons' eyes are ornamented with silver *takazogan*.





25

A Japanese Presentation Arrowhead, or Yanone, by Sukemune

17th Century. Edo period
Steel. 41.5 cm / 16.3 in

PROVENANCE

The Paul Goodman collection, USA

This *watakushi* type arrowhead is pierced at the barbs with whorls and its outer edge has a *shinogi*. Also pierced is the characters *Shimuja*, which means 'purity of mind.' The arrowhead is signed on the *tang* with the maker's name, *Sukemune*.





26

A Massive Japanese Arrowhead, or Yanone

18th century. Edo period
Steel. 40 cm / 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

PROVENANCE

The Paul Goodman collection, USA

This large arrowhead, the largest *yanone* known to exist, is of *karimata* type. It is tempered with a *suguha* edge.





27

A Japanese Dagger, or Aikuchi Koshirae, Signed by the Master Hagiya Katsuhira

Third-quarter of the 19th century. Late Edo and Meiji periods
Steel, silver, gold leaf, and *shakudo*, lacquered wood. 49 cm / 19 ¼ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

The blade here is inscribed *Yamato Daijo Fujiwara Masanori*, and dates to the Edo period, 1615-1660, while the silver *aikuchi* mounts date to the late Edo or Meiji periods, the second half of the 19th century, and are signed with the *mei* of the artist Hagiya Katsuhira of Mito province.

The earlier blade, or *tang*, is inscribed 'Yamato Daijo Fujiwara Masanori.' It was made by a bladesmith named Masanori, who claimed descent from the Fujiwara clan, and used the honorary title *Yamato Daijo*, or in other words 'Great Official of Yamato province.' Two bladesmiths are known to have used this elaborate signature: the first active circa 1615 and the second, possibly his son, working circa 1660. Each worked in Fuki, in the province of Echizen, but the earlier recorded smith was originally from Tango province.







秋谷勝平

The dagger is mounted in the *aikuchi* style, which is to say with the *tsuka*, or hilt, and *saya*, scabbard, meeting without a *tsuba* (guard) between them. The *aikuchi* mounting had become a preferred and fashionable mounting style for Japanese daggers and lent itself to *kinko* artists who specialised in the design and production of luxurious edged weapon mountings and their fittings. Note for example how Hagiya Katsuhira, the very highly esteemed maker of this dagger's hilt and scabbard, devised the seamless union of those two parts within his design – a breath-taking aesthetic achievement. The complex and detailed entwining of the dragon's body over this dagger is characteristic of Katsuhira's *aikuchi koshirae* work.

Katsuhira was born in 1804, in Mito province. He studied kinko craft under Shinozaki Katsushige and Ōyama Motozane and went on during the late Edo period to play an important part as a master of kinko in Mito, adding the *gō*, or artname, *Seiryōken* to his signature. Katsuhira was in turn master to the great *kinko* artist Unno Shōmin, and from 1844 worked for the ruling Mito-Tokugawa fiefdom.

Today, a wide range of stunning works by Hagiya Katsuhira are preserved in museum collections: his decorated *tsuba* are in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, and the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Other of his works of art are in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.





28

An Indian Carved Ivory Priming Flask

Mid-17th century

Ivory, brass and ebony. 27.5 x 6.5 cm / 10.8 x 2 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France

Made in two curved sections, this priming flask is carved in relief with a multitude of native animals. The nozzle is designed to mimic an antelope head, its horns and eyes inset with contrasting beads. A pair of tiger's masks decorate the rear of the nozzle. Panels on both sides each contain an antelope leaping through naturalistic foliage and the flask's rear is carved with a band of elephant and tiger masks.

Mughal and Deccan craftsmen created primers carved with hunting scenes and fantastical animals beginning in the early 17th century, though this flask is most likely Deccan because of the character of the animals that comprise the

mid-section. The origin of these creatures derives from both Persian and Hindu traditions and the animal, often composite forms, are found throughout a variety of media, particularly drawings and paintings.

The earliest datable flasks of this type are in the former Saxon Electoral collections in Dresden; in fact two flasks there were recorded in the 1658 inventory of the collection of Prince Elector Johann Georg II. Two further examples are in the National Museum, Copenhagen: one recorded in the inventory of 1690 and both recorded in there by 1737. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has three comparable flasks.





29

An Indian Lacquered Hide Shield

18th century. Mysore or Deccan

Buffalo-hide, gold and velvet. 45 cm / 17 ¾ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

From Mysore or Deccan, the surface of this richly decorated shield repeats the *Shi'ite* inscription:

La Fata illa Ali La Saif illa Dhu'l-faqar

There is no hero but Ali, and there is no sword
but the *Dhu'l-faqar*

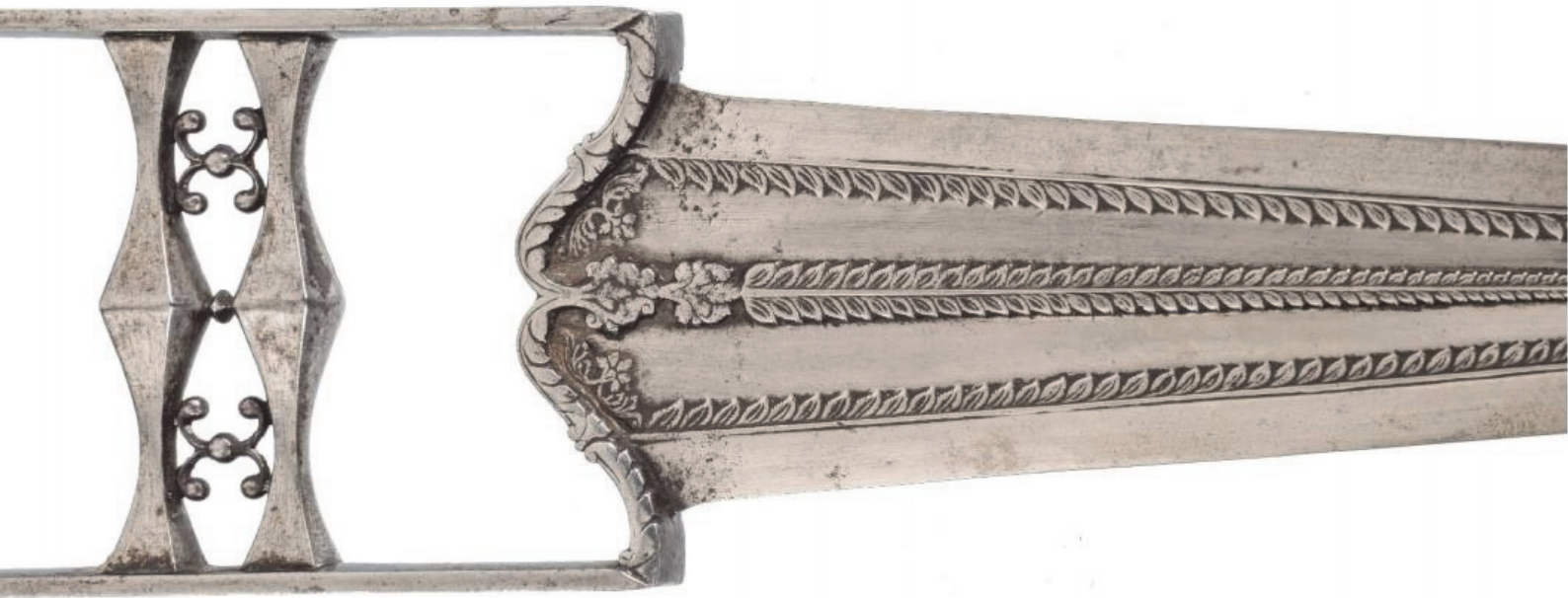
The sword *Dhu'l-faqar* is the mystic bifurcated sword of the Caliph Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad; it is held sacred within the *Shi'a* narrative.

The holy text is written in large gilt *thulth* script and forms four symmetrical segments also filled

with a minutely detailed gilt pattern of flower-heads on meandering leafy tendrils. A band of a similar pattern of open lotus blooms encircles the rim – open lotus flowers in the border ornament of the shield's outer surface contrast with those closed lotus heads found on the verso of the shield in a corresponding border. The thought given to such details indicates the prestige accorded armour and weapons by the Indian ruling nobility.

This shield in a pristine state of conservation throughout.





30

An Indian Katar in the Mughal Fashion

Late 17th - early 18th century
Iron. 50 cm / 19 ³/₄ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

This *katar*'s iron hilt is finished entirely in white; its blade has a chiselled central narrow ridge and a running lotus leaf pattern, which originates from small clusters of flowers at the blade's base.

The piece shows Mughal influence and has a grip and blade closely comparable to that on a katar illustrated in the catalogue of the collection of Jorge Caravana, *Rites of Power, Oriental Weapons*.





31

An Indian Gold-Encrusted Katar

18th Century

Steel and gold. 40.5 x 8.5 cm / 16 x 3 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

The hilt of this *katar* is made of russet iron and decorated with a diagonal pattern of gold narrow lines which enclose rows of gold dots in *koftgari* work. Gold *koftgari* birds perched between leafy scrolls mirror each other on the grip. A watered steel blade contains a broad recessed panel divided into six segments, while the medial ridge is chiseled and damascened with a flower.

Katars or 'punch daggers' were intended to be thrust into an opponent or prey, thus the weapon had to be used at very close range.

Rajput royalty used katars to hunt tigers and even crocodiles, certainly a demonstration of their courage and martial skill; but the weapons were symbols of status as much as bravery.

Katars, also known as *jamadhar*, or 'death tooth,' are of Hindu origin: their earliest representations date to the 10th century. They can be traced in Islamic literature to as early as the 13th century, and the katar was the most common sidearm throughout India, in both Hindu and Indo-Muslim cultures, from the 16th century onward.





32

An Indian Katar with Gold-encrusted Hilt

18th Century

Steel and gold. 45 x 8 cm / 17 ¾ x 35 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

A pattern of dense, narrow rows of leaves cover the gold-encrusted hilt of this *katar*. The designs are arranged on a barely visible, contrasting russet ground. The katar's blade is of watered

steel and ends with a narrow point of diamond section, reinforced to better pierce an enemy's protective mail.





33

*A Pair of Silver-Mounted Indian Flintlock
Holster Pistols, by Claude Martin, at the
Lucknow Arsenal*

circa 1785

Wood, steel, silver and gold. 42 cm / 16.5 in

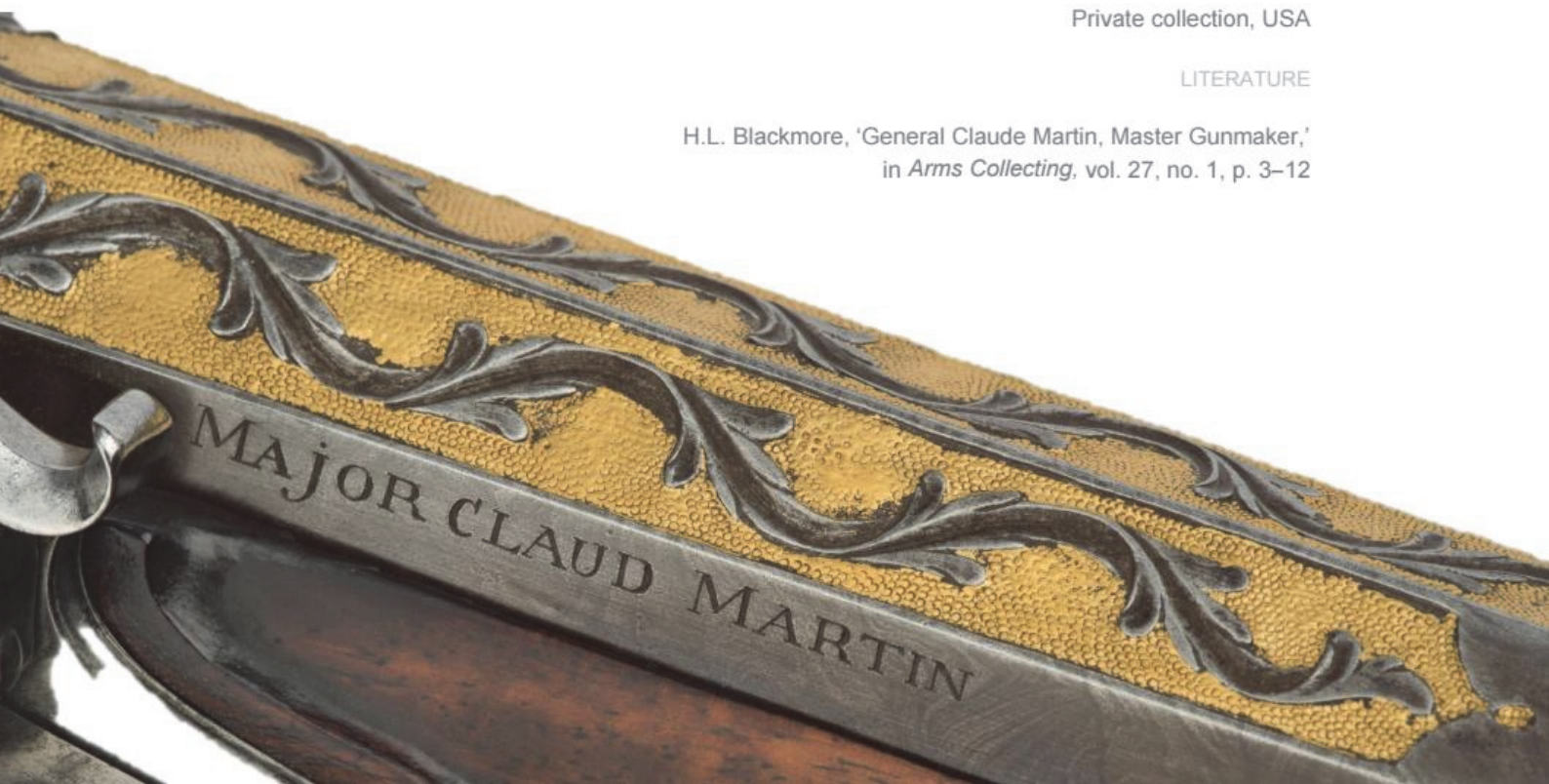
PROVENANCE

The Arsenal of Claude Martin

Private collection, USA

LITERATURE

H.L. Blackmore, 'General Claude Martin, Master Gunmaker,'
in *Arms Collecting*, vol. 27, no. 1, p. 3-12



Born in Lyons, Claude Martin first visited India after enlisting in the French Army. There he became a prisoner of the English, and soon after, employed by them. In charge of surveying territories acquired by the East India Company in Oudh, Martin came into contact with Nawab Asaf as-daula, and a friendship developed that lasted until the Nawab's death in 1797. In 1776, the Company made Martin Superintendent of the Nawab's arsenal at Lucknow. By 1779 Martin was made a Major and was given permission to reside permanently in Lucknow, which allowed Martin to pursue commercial interests that resulted in him becoming a very wealthy man.

The French renegade Raymond (Hadjee Mustapha) described Martin as '*a man desirous of all kinds of knowledge, and although he is at the head of a large fortune, which he owes only to his own industry, he works whole days together at all the arts that concern watch-*

making and gun-smith work with as much bodily labour as if he had his bread to earn by it...[he] has a Lucknow manufactory where he makes pistols and fusils better both as to lock and barrel, than the best arms that come from Europe...Sir Elijah Impey...carried to Europe one pair of these pistols.'

As well as working on his various businesses and arms-making Martin also conducted a number of scientific experiments including the invention of 'the first balloon that ever floated in the air of Asia' Martin established his own private mint where he struck coins and medals for himself and the Nawab. He was a keen botanist and an amateur artist and patron of Johan Zoffany. (A painting by Zoffany dated 1786 shows the artist in company with Martin.) Martin also had an interest in architecture and was involved in the design of his residences at Farhad Bakhsh, Nudjeph Ghurr and his splendid Constantia Palace at Lucknow.



A Pair of Indian Miniature Tipuesque Cannon

1800. Mysore
Bronze. 22.5 x 12.5 cm / 5 x 9 in each

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Great Britain

Cast in bronze, the muzzle and *cascabel* of this cannon are in the form of a tiger's head. The pair would have been used to mark *iftar*, the time to break fast during the month of Ramadan. Fasting during this month is one of the Five Pillars of Islam – and worshippers must refrain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk.

Known as the 'Tiger of Mysore,' Tipu Sultan (r. 1782–1799) adopted the tiger as his symbol, which was ingeniously incorporated into the construction and decoration of arms and armor during his rule. The distinct style continued to dominate Mysore's artistic production into the nineteenth century.





35

An Indian Katar with a Gem-set Gilt and Enamelled Hilt

circa 1800–30

Gold foil and sheet, metal, polychrome enamels, stones and steel. 23 x 12.5 cm / 9 x 5 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Switzerland

The collection of Robin Wiggington, early 1980's

Private collection, Great Britain

The lavish use of enamels and gold-set semi-precious cabochons to decorate the hilts of swords and daggers descended from the Mughal influenced workshops established in the city of Bikaner, in north-west Rajasthan, in the 17th century. However it was the city of Jaipur, from its foundation in 1727, which became the seat of rule in Rajasthan and the region's centre for the production of luxury goods – a tradition that still flourishes.

A comparable katar is preserved in the Wallace Collection, London, and a very similar example was included in the 1988 Paris exhibition *Splendeur des armes orientales*. The gold-set cabochon designs on the hilt of the katar here also compare closely with those of very similar workmanship on the hilt and scabbard of a *talwar*, or sword, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





36

An Indian Gem-Set Pesh-Kabz with Scabbard and a Concealed Set of Small Implements

19th century

Gilt-brass, wootz steel, semi-precious stones, glass beads, wood and velvet. 44 cm / 17 ¼ in

The highly decorative treatment of the present dagger hilt is descended from the Mughal taste brought to India in the 17th century; it would seem most likely that the Indian concept of small implements contained within a hilt would share this origin.

A 19th century Iranian dagger in the Khalili collection has its hilt similarly hollowed to accommodate a set of small implements. Most of the pieces which comprise that set of implements differ from those concealed within the dagger under discussion, but the exact purpose of both sets is uncertain. They are certainly not weapons, but the individual pieces in both sets will have specialist functions,

possibly intended for some medical application, or conceivably for domestic or grooming purposes. Of the four pieces in the present set, three are intended to fit the single threaded handle also housed within the dagger hilt. One is formed with a knife blade, another has a hooked end, another has a minutely bifurcated tip, and the last has a minute disc at one end and an angular cutting edge at the other.

The catalogue entry for the dagger cited in the Khalili collection presents the evidence of a French chronicler writing in the 13th century, who recorded Syrian assassins using daggers with hollow hilts containing several smaller knives.





37

*An Indian
Silver-Mounted
Buffalo-Horn
Powder Flask*

circa 1850–60

Horn, silver, steel and brass. 28.5 cm / 11.2 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Germany

The slightly curved body of this powder flask is made of a single piece of hollowed buffalo horn decorated with silver mounts. The top mount has a pierced band, flanked by two smaller bands, of etched lattice and arabesque work. The silver cap has a band of stamped double

circles and is surmounted by a silver pierced leaf tab. The bottom mount is embellished with two thick bands of repousse lattice decoration. This shape and type of priming flask was popular throughout India, particularly in the northern regions.



Peter Finer

ESTABLISHED 1967

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